The IDLER

Public Occurrences, Comment, Excursions & Rational Entertainment

Nr 16 JANUARY 1966 35c THE COPY

Hubert Finks Out

REPORTING THE POLISH'D HORDE

BACK TO THE FARM?

Other Current Matters

Alas, poor Hubert. We knew him well, Hubert Horatio: a fellow of infinite eloquence, of most excellent liberalism. He hath borne progress on his back a thousand times. Where be your ideas now? your courage? your flashes of brilliance and prophecy that were wont to set the nation on a roar? . . . To what base uses we may return, Hubert Horatio!

IN TRUTH, MR. HUMPHREY is making out somewhat better than poor Yorick. After all, he *is* alive and the Vice President, although the latter condition sometimes obscures the former. And there is the possibility that, through some grim working of fate, he may rise suddenly to the presidency or that, through some fortuitous working of fate, Bobby Kennedy may stumble along the way to the 1972 convention.

But Hubert Humphrey is too charitable a man to consider accidental elevation to the presidency with anything but horror. And as for 1972 — that battle's five years hence. Five years is a long time, almost as long as the time since John Kennedy defeated Mr. Humphrey in the West Virginia primary and thus (one imagined at the time) assured the Minnesotan political oblivion.

Time does change things. In the meanwhile, Mr. Humphrey uncomplainingly goes about the business of being chief eunuch of the Johnson Administration.

It is, we are told, the realistic thing to do. It is also sad; sad not just because he has put his liberalism in hock for the duration, but sad because he has pawned his courage and his eloquence as well. His speeches since he became Vice President have been atrocious and ungenuine. They sound as if written by a ghostwriter forced at knifepoint to extoll the gossamer glories of the Great Society. And who would have suspected that Hubert Humphrey would one day join the ranks of red-baiters, giving speeches like the one before the Detroit Economic Club in which he spoke thus of an anti-Administration demonstration:

"Do you think those demonstrators were organized by some fine little social club? They were organized by international apparatus. Ninety-five per cent of the demonstrators are no more Communist than you or I. But the international Communist movement organized it and masterminded it."

Ten years ago, we heard a different Hubert Humphrey:

"In far too many instances there has been a failure to distinguish between disloyalty and nonconformity. All too often new ideas and unorthodox expressions have been labelled suspect. We must fight vigorously against the sinister concept of guilt by association."

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The Idler

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obsequiousness towards the President he not only guarantees that he will have to bear the full burden of the Johnson Administration's failure; he also leaves the field open to the brothers Kennedy who, bearing no such burden, can proceed happily towards the victory of their choice in 1972.

It seems safe to assume that the attractiveness of an administration (and Johnson's would not appear to be an exception) is pretty well dissipated by the time its two terms are up. The loyal, faithful, trustworthy vice president is likely to discover that he remains loyal, faithful and trustworthy to a cause the public no longer wants. It is a sad prospect for a man who would be president.

Not Always Like That

Vice presidents have not always been merely the president's toady. The trend towards toadyism in the vice-presidency has been strong in recent years, but it used to be different.

When Thomas Jefferson was vice president he found himself in disagreement with President John Adams

Humphrey has sometimes been accused in the past of being a dangerous demagogue. This is unfair. He makes an ineffective demagogue. He only says well what he really believes. A half-hearted, insincere Humphrey does not move the masses, as Democrats in New York and Philadelphia found out last November to their chagrin. The Humphrey gift for words depends upon a strong infusion of truth. When he reaches towards political cynicism he does a lousy job of it. He remains, thank God, an amateur among Machiavellians and a poor one at that.

Humphrey, of course, believes he is following a prudent path until that distant day when the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party comes his way. Unfortunately, this pursuit of a pragmatic course contains the seeds of its own failure. By his

Jefferson: Don't Trust Burr

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and closeted himself at Monticello towards the end of his term while his supporters prepared the groundwork for his own presidential campaign.

Jefferson got along not much better with his own vice president, Aaron Burr. He wrote of Burr: "His conduct very soon inspired me with distrust. I habitually cautioned Mr. Madison against trusting him too much."

John C. Calhoun, as vice president, sparred zestfully with two presidents, John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, before finally resigning for a place in the Senate.

Vice President Millard Filmore and President Taylor took opposite tacks on the slavery question in the closing period of Taylor's term of office.

Filmore: Opposite Tack

Arthur: Started Early

Vice President Chester Arthur and President James Garfield started scrapping even before they were inaugurated and Arthur told his friends that Garfield has "broken every pledge made to us; not only that, but . . . in a most offensive way."

Vice President Thomas Hendricks spent considerable effort opposing President Cleveland's extension of the merit system.

In his memoirs, Harry Truman offers these comments on the relationship between Twentieth Century presidents and vice presidents:

"Woodrow Wilson fell out with Vice President Marshall in 1917-18. In Harding's administration Coolidge was Vice President, and I believe there was little warm feeling between them. When Coolidge was elected President, he had Charles G. Dawes as Vice President and the two were not close. After Hoover was elected President, he and Vice President Curtis were not very congenial.

". . . (John Nance) Garner's philosophy of government was not in line with Mr. Roosevelt's program to deal with the depression. After two terms the President decided that he wanted a different running mate and he choose Henry Wallace. From the time he was inaugurated, Wallace sat with the President in cabinet meetings, but the President was not very happy over the result, and many of his political friends helped persuade him that Wallace should not be considered for another term."

Roosevelt's relationship with Cactus Jack Garner is particularly interesting compared with the current situation. The two fought over extension of a major trade agreement. Garner opposed a third term for FDR. And

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FDR: Cactus Jack Went Home

when the Supreme Court packing debate was in full swing, Garner complained that "my ears are buzzing and ringing" and took off for Texas to get away from the fray. Roosevelt wrote his vice president, begging him to come back.

How the strong-willed Truman would have fared through a full four years under Roosevelt is a matter for speculation. As it was, Truman's vice presidency lasted less than three months. And one can wonder how peaceable a vice president Teddy Roosevelt would have been if McKinley's death had not quickly elevated him to the presidency.

Nixon Learns to Heel

The big change in the nature of the vice presidency came during the bland years of the Eisenhower Administration. Where once good relations between president and vice president had been a matter of chance now they were institutionalized.

In effect, a bargain was struck. The vice presidency, long a political cul de sac "not worth a bucket of warm spit," was given added prestige and dignity. The vice president was given committees to chair, good-will tours to make, and was featured in innumerable news stories that told what an important man he was.

In return for this new recognition (and, presumably, increased chance of future political success), the vice president surrendered his political individuality and integrity for the length of his term of office. He changed from being one of the nation's leading politicians to being its leading civil servant.

Nixon fitted easily into this role. He was the organization man without peer. With few durable convictions of his own, he quickly adapted to those of the chief executive in order to further his own ambitions. He was, in public at least, the faithful cocker spaniel heeling at the President's side until it was time for him to run on his own.

Mr. Johnson also had little trouble playing the part of the efficient, loyal, undisruptive junior executive on his way up.

And now Humphrey — who recently said "Hell, I'm an organization man" — has unabashedly taken up the new grey-flanneled tradition of Nixon and LBJ.

Under this tradition the vice president has given up all thought of acting as a quasi-independent power cen-

Truman: Too Short to Know

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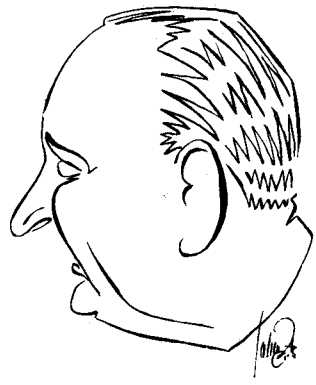
ter. Although he holds a unique and usefully ambiguous constitutional position, straddling the executive and legislative branches (does he not have responsibilities to the Senate as well as to the president?); although he can not be fired; although he always has easy access to the public; and although he can affect the president's fortunes just as the president can affect his; the revised standard version of the vice president does not take advantage of his situation. He is content to sit at the head of the National Aeronautics and Space Council and play good old wishy-washy Charlie Brown to the president.

There is no room here for constructive conflict between the president and vice president. The vice president is

not a man to court or contend with, but a man to order about at will.

The bait, of course, is the hope on the part of the vice president that he too may sometime become president. If Humphrey were to become more outspoken Johnson would quickly remind him of this.

But as suggested earlier, is this not a false hope? Look at what happened to Nixon. After eight years of careful grooming for the presidency, the public rejected him in favor of a totally untried junior senator. Remember Nixon describing himself as experienced and Kennedy as "immature?"



It didn't make any difference; the public was ready for a change.

There is not much reason to believe that the Nixon experience will be the exception in the future. Anyway he plays the game, the outlook for a vice president is not very bright, so he might as well at least maintain his integrity.

Besides, a vice president is normally placed on the national ticket to bring in support the presidential candidate might otherwise lose. The voter is told by the number two candidate, "Look, you may not like the man running for president, but I'm going to be there too, and I'll keep him straight after he's elected."

But it doesn't happen like that. After the election, the voter discovers he has been flimflammed. The vice president is so wrapped up in his sycophancy that he forgets all responsibility to the people who were his excuse for getting on the ticket in the first place.

That's politics, you may say. If this is true — if the Nixon-Johnson-Humphrey tradition is the inevitable course of the future — then perhaps we are nominating the wrong sort of men for the post.

Under present ground rules, for example, either Bill Moyers or Jack Valenti probably would make a better vice president than Hubert Humphrey. They certainly better meet all the current standards for excellence: unfaltering loyalty, self-effacement,

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efficiency, blandness, and a willingness to praise endlessly the chief executive.

Further they would have less inner conflict about their role and thus would be less likely to contract schizophrenia or ulcers.

The macabre spectre of presidential disability, however, makes one stop short of recommending a Moyers, or a Valenti for the job. For this lone uncomfortable reason, we sleep better at night knowing that Hubert Humphrey is in the . . . where is he, anyway?

Excursions

Two tales out of school

By Erbin Crowell

I

IT WAS A HOT afternoon and we were all tired, but I was bound and determined that they should learn the basics of tense. I had tried everything — it seemed like everything. They were the "slow class," the "underachievers," the "basic track," and I had become used to the shotgun approach to learning: no lesson plan, just try to start something and then somehow bend it towards a grammar lesson. It worked better than a lesson plan, which they would smell a mile off and revolt against — another cold agency of society seeking to bend them to conformity or bury them alive.

I had already tried the old "look, just ask yourself whether *it* occurred yesterday, *it* is happening now, or *it* will happen after this moment — like tomorrow" gambit. Then I began writing Frost's *Fire and Ice* on the board. It occurred to me that it demonstrated all the simple tenses in its compact lines. I wasn't sure, but I had already started, so I continued, underlining verbs as I went:

Some *say* the world *will end* in fire
Some *say* in ice.
From what *I've tasted* of desire,
I *hold* with those who *favor* fire.

We went over the verbs and they caught on. By the end of the poem, all hands were being raised each time we reached a new verb. I let discipline go to pot. Everyone answered at once. We had done it.

Then they wanted to talk about the poem. I had often tried sly maneuvers to get them to consider some of the subtleties of verse, but they'd have nothing of it. Now they wanted to talk about a tense-of-verb exercise as poetry. Remembering Ciardi, I quickly pounced on them: the poem as game; the game as something made difficult, so that we could glory in making it look easy. Frost made his own game here apart from his rules of rhythm and rhyme. His big game was one of comparing big and small, the universe and frail human traits, the cosmos and the heart. In the comparison, I speculated, maybe Frost hoped to make both extremes more nearly their right size.

"What has desire got to do with fire?" asked one boy, "I don't . . ."

Then small flickers of puberty broke in on him.

There was just enough science in our collective memories to mention the opposing theories of the end of the earth; but rather than pursue the probabilities of the earth crashing into the sun or drifting far enough from its distant warmth to freeze numb and still, we stuck with Frost and began trying to bring remote comparisons closer to home.

Hands were going up. Arguments between students began—"Oh yeah," "Now I see how he," "I don't think that," "Wasn't Frost at the inauguration of," "My uncle said that . . ."

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HUGH HAYNIE ...

"We're Extremely Opposed To Extremism, But We Must Be Extremely Careful Not To Offend Any Extremists"

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Frost: More Than Tenses

We milked the poem as dry as a class of culturally deprived, backward, slow junior high students and teacher possibly could.

The bell rang. As I walked back to the front of the room, tired and pleased, one hand was raised amidst the shuffle of books:

"Mr. Crowell, uh, how do ya get to be a poet; d'ya have to get permission? Do you have to buy a license?"

II

JAMES WAS ONE of fifty students in a special District of Columbia school for the worst discipline problems from the city's entire system. The school had been set up in a moment of Congressional weakness (or oversight on the part of southern legislators). The plan was to put these losers with five teachers and see if small classes, progressive techniques and easier discipline could rehabilitate them. Psychiatric and psychological staff were to be provided. An employment officer was to serve the school. It was to be set up so a boy could pursue his own interests in a less rigid situation. Personal counselling, etc.

So much for the plan. It and the school were promptly forgotten. I asked to teach there, was accepted, and found it stuck away in the annex of a junior high. There were five teachers, fifty boys and eight rooms. There were no up-to-date teaching materials; my newest literature anthology was dated 1927.* There was no wood shop; there was no metal class; there was no print shop. The gymnasium consisted of a room with half a wrestling mat and a ping-pong table. We could use the playground only when the junior high didn't need it. For psychological consultation, two volunteers came in once a week to talk to the teachers (who came to need it more than the students). The budget was barely enough to provide stamps and envelopes for the office.

James was one of the wild ones. Most of the boys were "tough guys," whose bitter hatred of what life had done to them made them helpless with defensiveness. All the students were Negro with the exception of a white boy who was usually truant. I was the only white teacher. James freely admitted one day that he probably hated me because I was white and assumed that I hated him for the same reason. I convinced him otherwise only to the point that he could make small wry jokes. "Is it true blondes have more fun?" he would whisper and break into uncontrolled laughter. He, like most of the other boys, was hip to psychological jargon, having gone through several sessions with reassuring counselors and their big words.

"The reason we don't get along, teacher, is that it's hard for me to accept you as a father figure," he said one day and then ran down the hall.

One day I goaded him into reading a book. He thought the title was hilarious when I said it.

"Do you know what *Black Like Me* is about?" I countered as he roared, "you sound like Linus in *Peanuts* who laughs at anything he can't understand."

"Gimme the goddamned book," he finally said, "I can read it."

It hit him hard. We were able to talk about it. In his own tough words, he asked me to explain how a white

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man could care enough to go through such danger and degradation in order to understand the personal emotions of being a Negro in the South.

"Man, he must have been crazy," he repeated in disbelief. This white man with an artificial black face became a small bond between this defeated colored boy and his lily-white idealistic teacher. The boy's behavior didn't change much, except when he was away from the other students when he would try to drag out whatever understanding I had of such a "crazy man." We began to talk of the meaning of words and how the author had pretty well captured the bite of pain that "nigger," "spade," "white only," and "coon" could mean to a man. James began to wonder why mere words could hurt.

He finished the book. His conduct was little changed. We forgot about it. Then one day I was trying to trick his class into reading some short stories.

"I found these books in the bookroom. I don't know if they're worth a damn, so I want you guys to read one of the stories and tell me if you think they can be used in the younger class. Be honest now. If you think they're lousy, tell me, and I'll throw them away."

It seemed to work and soon they were all reading. One boy suddenly broke the relative quiet by throwing his book as hard as he could, barely missing me.

"What's that for?" I shouted, grabbing a book to defend myself from the additional shot that was sure to come. My attacker was a boy named Tom, who seemed embarrassed that he had come so close. He had obviously thrown the book in blind anger — not at me specifically, I hoped — and that anger seethed from his sullen face. He wouldn't speak. I had learned that Tom was to be left alone when in such a fit, so I went back to grading papers. I didn't notice that James had silently picked up the book and taken it back to Tom. I only noticed them when their whispers rose and then suddenly James let out a horse laugh.

"Hey, come here; there's what it was," he shouted, pointing at a page in the book. And there it was: "nigger" — the word seemed to stand out on the page. "Well," I stumbled, "You see, Tom, I didn't know that . . . I mean, you've got to . . ."

"No, it's all right," James broke in almost merrily, "you see, he doesn't know what we know . . . that nigger isn't what you are. Nigger is just the way you act. Even white folks can be niggers, can't they?" "Right man," I said and James put out his hand. We shook in that knowing cool sliding way, and I went back to my desk.

The year ended with James in trouble as usual. I lost track of him. I found myself, during the years that followed, often remembering and retelling about this small reward (you know: the sort of thing we teachers are supposed to prefer to salaries), this small feat on my part as a teacher. One boy released from a crippling fear of at least one word. I hoped that it had got him to looking at words for what they were. Perhaps he might have found a way to use them to his own advantage. But I never knew.

Until he called the other day.

"You probably don't remember me, but I wanted to tell you I got into vocational school and I'm gonna be a printer."

"I remember you, James, and that's great."

"I graduate this year. I have a part-time job. I might come by and see you sometime."

"Do that, James."

"Oh yes, do you remember Steve and Tom? Well, they got sent to reform school."

"That's too bad, James. Why didn't you straighten them out?"

"Darn, I had enough trouble with myself. Well, I better go. I'll call you again sometime."

I hung up the phone. A printer. I wondered if he would ever have to set type for a book he didn't like. He might even someday have to fix up

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the word "nigger" for thousands of sheets of white paper. I wondered if he'd remember. He might even capitalize it. I hoped he'd capitalize it, just for the hell of it.

HOLD ON!

By Charles McDowell, Jr.

Washington, D.C.

DEAR AUNT GERTRUDE:

I am flattered that so many members of the Ladies' Fourth Friday Club accepted your invitation to address individual questions to me about the federal government.

You need not have apologized so profusely in your letter for getting me into this. I can understand how you might have blurted out the invitation when the board was discussing possible projects for Better Informed Citizens' Month, and I will have forgiven you by this time next year.

Actually, it probably is good for those of us in Washington to know what really interests people at the grass roots. I kept reminding myself of that, over and over, while working on the questions.

Although I will have to work longer, perhaps indefinitely, on a few of the questions, here are the answers to some of them.

For Mrs. F. C.—No, the federal government is not likely to intercede to stop members of a volunteer fire department from playing poker at the firehouse, although, as you allege, they may have told their wives that they have to refold the hose and shine the engine. You can write to J. Edgar Hoover if you want to, but I think he, too, will advise you to seek a remedy at the state, local or household level.

For Mrs. W. F.—No, I certainly do not believe that an elderly gentleman who has worn a beard for 30 years should shave it off to demonstrate his support for our boys in Viet Nam. Reassure your father that nobody is going to mistake him for a peacenik. His belligerency in all matters is well known throughout the county.

For Miss P. M.—Yes, as far as I am concerned the young men who have been escorting Linda and Luci Johnson are "suitable."

For Mrs. H. H.—Frankly, I doubt that the Office of Economic Opportunity will make a grant for "educational activity among the youth of the community" to the Barry Goldwater Chapter of the Young Republican Club.

For Mrs. P. J.—The interest rate that everyone is talking about is the charge a bank makes for lending money. The fact that your husband becomes red-faced and profane whenever it is mentioned is something you probably ought to take up with his physician and perhaps his pastor.

For Mrs. A. L.—No, when a bulb burns out on the national Christmas tree near the White House, the whole string does not go out.

For Miss V. McG.—Yes, as I understand it the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission agrees that a woman's sex should not disqualify her from a job driving a bulldozer, but to answer your specific inquiry, I have not heard of any openings.

For Mrs. A. G.—The House Un-American Activities Committee has no plans that I know of to investigate the new math, fluoridated water or the perfume advertisements in the current magazines. If this confirms your suspicion that the committee itself has thrown in with the conspiracy, I don't know where to tell you to turn.

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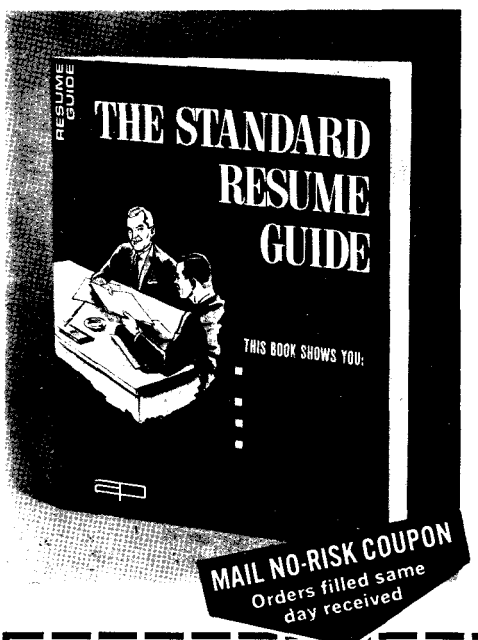

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For Mrs. M. T.—McGeorge Bundy (not George McBundy) did not write "A Thousand Days" (not "The Hundred Days") but Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., (not Theodore Sorensen) did write it, and if that is the book you are thinking about, I would say it would be an interesting one to review for the Book Group.

For Mrs. F. H.—Yes, I would say offhand that it is possible to be for highway beautification without compromising yourself as a member of the Republican county committee.

As for your question, Aunt Gertrude, I answered it when I told Mrs. F. C. that poker playing at the volunteer fire department is not a federal matter. As for Uncle Frazier's tendency to draw to inside straights, I must defend an American's individual right to make a fool of himself—yes, even steadily for 42 years.

Your nephew,

Charley

Back to the Farm?

THERE IS A NOTION, popular in recent years, that the small farmer is done for. He is, one is told, an economic anachronism. And who is less appreciated in America these days than the man who does not pull his weight in the struggle for an ever increasing gross national product?

It is conveniently forgotten that the small farmer was driven out of circulation in part by horrendous agricultural policies, allegedly designed in his interest, but actually directed towards the welfare of large agricultural producers. Only recently are commentators and "informed sources" resurrecting the memory of a Mr. Brannan who, more than fifteen years ago, offered proposals that might well have improved the situation down on the farm and also prevented much of the rural migration to the big cities that aggravates the problem with which Mr. Shriver's people are trying to deal. Mr. Brannan, then Secretary of Agriculture, proposed a system of direct cash payments to farmers and also, incidentally, proposed to limit these payments to the first $25,700 of production. Mr. Brannan had concern for the small farmer. Congress did not. So much the worse.

Oh well, there's not much point in crying over spilt and surplus milk, wheat or soybeans. Here we are in the third year of our Lyndon, faced with 15 million rural Americans living in poverty and a still larger number of urban Americans in the same plight.

Part of the solution to rural poverty, you will recall, was to get all those inefficient producers off the farm and into the cities where there were jobs. So they came. The transfer was accomplished effectively, but the results were dismal. The jobs that were supposed to be in the cities weren't. We had not cured poverty, but merely relocated it.

Economic efficiency does not necessarily produce desirable social ends. We can turn out automobiles like doughnuts, but our system does not permit the slum dweller decent housing. We can produce food in cornucopian proportions yet we have millions of rural citizens who are inadequately fed.

To be sure, the Johnson Administration has placed more emphasis on social goals than we have seen in some time. But these goals—and the anti-poverty program is a prime example—tend to focus heavily on the cities since that is where most of the people are and, presumably, will continue to be.

This is unfortunate since the elimination of poverty and the solution of other social problems depend upon improvement of both rural and urban life and upon using these improvements to complement each other.

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Consider several facts of city life: overcrowding, continuing underemployment, the prospect of growing automation, the high cost of urban welfare and housing programs, rising crime rates.

We can, using strictly urban solutions, solve many of the problems arising from these facts. But it is obvious that the price is going to be extremely high if we rely on programs that encourage people to come to or stay in the city and provide few that encourage people—especially those on the fringe of our economy—to move or stay out.

This is why national agricultural and rural policy is of crucial importance today even to those who never have seen a manure spreader or attended a Farm Bureau bean supper. There is more to the problems of rural America than a matter of price supports. We need to put all our land, not just the small per cent that supports our cities, to the best possible social use.

Viewed from this angle, the small farm has advantages that have been ignored in our haste to produce the greatest amount of food on the fewest farms.

Consider the marginal farmer. He is inefficient in food production. But what about his other characteristics?

His house costs less, even if improved to acceptable standards, than an urban public housing unit. He has the potential of producing a portion of his family's food supply. His living costs are less than those of the low income city dweller. He does not contribute to urban transportation problems or crime rates. He lives in a healthier natural environment than his urban peer.

In short, the man living in rural poverty may not be better off than the man living in urban poverty, but the cost of raising his living standard to a decent level is considerably less.

Further, unless he can become fully economically productive by moving to the city — which chronic unemployment and automation tend to militate against—he is likely to live, once he has been raised to this standard, a better life than he would expect to find with the same income in the city.

We could encourage more people to stay in or move to rural areas in a variety of ways. There are existing rural housing loan programs that could be greatly expanded. Providing substandard rural farms with deep-freezers could bring a marked improvement in the ability of a farm families to provide their own food. The federal government could purchase (or provide the funds for states and local communities to purchase) small farms to be used as rural public housing units. These farms could be rented to farm families at low rates or eventually purchased by the families.

A successful program for rural areas would also require more cheap electricity, better medical services and improved schools.

One of the best ways to encourage the development of rural America would be to get more manufacturing plants to locate outside of metropolitan areas. This is a point made by W. B. Murphy, the president of Campbell Soup Co., who said recently:

"Manufacturers can do themselves a favor and our country a service by allocating a fair share of their new plants to the rural areas.

"We already have critical urban problems. Those problems will be compounded if the trend toward the metropolitan areas that characterized the past 35 years continues into the future."

"It is estimated that over the next 35 years, while our population will double, the number of farms will decrease from today's 3,300,000 to about 1,500,000 and that farm population will drop from today's 12½ million to about six million."

Mr. Murphy noted that:

"Even if there were no more manufacturing plants built in the already overcrowded urban areas, there is still more cleaning up to do, more building expansion, more growth in the urban

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centers than probably can be handled well."

We have, in recent years, devoted much talent and much money to city planning and urban renewal. We have not even begun to tap the potential that a similar emphasis on rural planning could provide. It's about time we started.

Mrs. Pillywilly's Pornology

By Uncle Abner

SALTLICKHAM

I FORGOT TO TELL you last month that when I was leaving Police Chief Matt Mudgette's office after that business about Ichabod's draft card, I noticed a pile of girlie magazines in the corner.

"Kind of old for that stuff, aren't you?" I said.

"Don't know 'bout that," Matt replied. "Anyway, t'ain't mine. Belongs to Mildred Pillywilly."

"How come?"

"Well, it seems like the Saltlickham Sewing, Garden and Bowling Club has started a crusade against pornography. They're just doing the research part now. But already they've run into trouble. That's why the books are here."

"I don't get you," I told Matt.

"When the ladies first started collecting the books — you know, to have examples of what they were fighting against — they took them home in between meetings. But that didn't work out because all the husbands took to reading the stuff. Some of the kids too. The last straw came when Mildred went into her 13-year-old son's tent in the back yard and discovered a pinup from one of the magazines stuck to the side of the tent with adhesive tape. Next day Mildred comes in with a truckload of these magazines and says can I store them here. I said, sure."

"What do they do? Hold the meetings here now?"

"Nope. One of the members comes down in her stationwagon each week to take it all to the meeting. I told her she was the first woman I ever saw driving a junk truck, but she didn't like that. And are they particular! I've got to sign a receipt each time the books come back. They say they don't want the magazines to get into the wrong hands."

"How's their research coming along?" I asked.

"Not too good. Oh, they've got their committees, don't you know, but—well, take a look at this:"

He handed me a printed sheet. Up at the top there were the words:

SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR THE CRUSADE AGAINST HARD-CORE PORNOLOGY OF THE SALTLICKHAM SEWING, GARDEN AND BOWLING CLUB

Then down below were all the names of the different subcommittees and their members. Included were:

Subcommittee on General Preversion
Subcommittee on the Dirty Words on Walls Problem
Subcommittee to Encourage Miller's Drugstore to get rid of Some of its Filthy Magazines

It looked pretty complete to me. "What's the matter with this?" I wanted to know.

"It looks good on paper," Matt said. "But they're having some real troubles. The Subcommittee on General Preversion complained that the Subcommittee to Encourage Miller's failed to come back from its field trips with enough good examples of what they want to protest. So they sent away to one of these mail order places to get some of the real hard-core stuff. Their report is due at next week's meeting but they still haven't got any of the junk. One lady, however, did get a call from a postal inspector in Boston asking whether she was willing to testify that this outfit was send-

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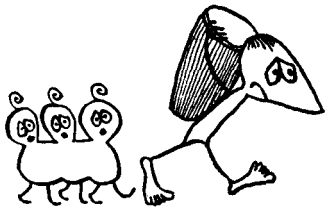
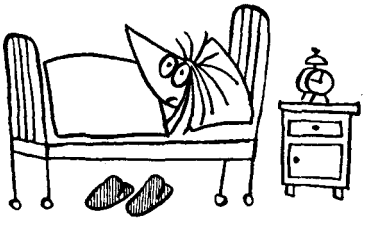
F Q M

We women take a more active part in public life than men admit.



It was me, for instance, who got up a petition to evict that noisy drummer and his illegitimate triplets from our building.

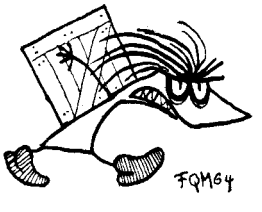
The new occupant looked pretty quiet, but you never can tell.



So I went to bed early and lay quite still and listened but there wasn't a sound from his apartment.

After a week of listening all night, my consumption of nerve pills was getting enormous.

And finally his quietness got so perverse that I went amok and had to move.



It's incredible how inconsiderate people are of their neighbors nowadays.

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ing unwanted filth to her house. She had to admit she had ordered it herself.

Matt continued, "Then there's the problem with the town historical museum. The Sewing, Garden and Bowling Club wants to have a display there to 'arouse the public' — so Mildred says — but the museum says nothing doing. Just like Mildred told me, "It's getting harder every day to fight sin."

"How come Charlie Thurston hasn't said anything about this crusade in his paper?"

"Well, Miller's a pretty big advertiser and I 'spect he doesn't want to upset him. It won't, though. Miller told me the other day, 'Matt, already in just two months of research, those ladies have bought more pulp magazines than I usually sell in a year. I can hardly wait until they make their report public."

"I guess that's why he ran out of *Playboy* so early this month," I said.

Matt looked at me kind of funny and remarked, "Who'd you say was too old for this stuff?"

Aromatic Treachery

By Edward P. Morgan

I HAVE JUST MADE a major scientific discovery but I don't know whether to call the Legion of Decency, Attorney General Katzenbach, Sigmund Freud or my barber.

There has been a lot of talk about the country's loose morals lately. Promiscuity, it seems, has become an integral part of the American way of life. I have traced this delicious deficiency upstream to its very headwaters, so to speak, and I can reveal that sex now comes in bottles. This is, obviously, a matter of utmost concern to the guardians of our morals. The Department of Justice also should be alerted because the suppression of civil rights and restraint in trade may be involved. Psychoanalysts will have to be mobilized to deal with the greatest threat to masculinity since Delilah clipped Samson. It follows logically that the nation's barbershops are accessories to the crime.

The thing is this: it used to be that conquest of the female by the male depended on looks, wit, charm, physical prowess (or weakness) and, maybe, money in the bank. No more. Today a fellow can no longer trust his own virility. He must rely on after-shave lotions with magnetic action to lure his woman, and persuasive toilet water guaranteed to clear the way to seduction. Think of the erosion of a swain's ego when he forgets to swathe his cheeks with the right flavor before his date!

If you think I'm kidding take a look at the magazines. They're saturated with ads for the aphrodisiac after-shave. The messages are loaded with promise and warning. "Silly boy," says a luscious temptress obviously standing up her escort in one pictorial layout, "next time wear Attache."

"You can smell other scents," pants another pitch. "The difference is that you experience Lenel . . . It adds so much to your masculine assurance . . . It is called the Scent of Success."

Kent of London candidly concedes that its Cologne for Men can't talk. "But women get the message. Women have never been exposed to it before. Think about that." I am thinking about it and my head swims.

Something called Centaur cologne is "half man. . . . half beast . . . all male . . . cloaks the body with an aroma transmitting a virile message that hovers for hours . . ."

Utter debauchery is the leit-motiv of Pub for Men in a technicolor ad illustration of a male surrounded by breasty Elizabethan types in an English saloon. "Uncork a flask of Pub Cologne," it dares you. "If you hear tankards clash and songs turn bawdy . . . and the innkeeper locks up his

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daughter for the night, it's because you've been into the Pub and unloosed the lusty life."

A more subtly explicit guarantee is vouchsafed in an ad for ointment called Piping Rock by a beautiful and slightly disheveled maiden sitting on a bed and murmuring "Was it him or his Piping Rock?" What I object to there is her bad grammar.

All this stuff should be on every girl's shopping list, if she is prepared for the consequences. "Give him Royal Oak Scented Lotion," trills one commercial incantation, "and kiss small talk goodbye. It may replace conversation entirely."

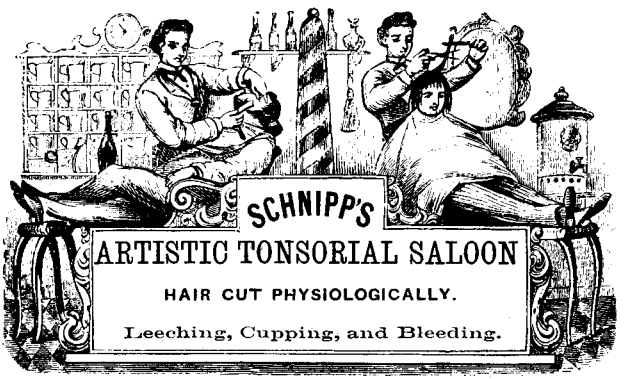
How James Bond got as far as he did without 007 After Shave is hard to divine. "007," says the adman's decoded signal, "gives any man the license to kill . . . women. Its subtle, masculine aroma makes women behave outrageously. They invent the wildest excuses just to be near you. Dangerous? Sure, but what a way to go."

I suspect a plot. Here is further corroborating evidence:

A facial cocktail labeled Caswell-Massey Number Six, clearly the masculine answer to Chanel Number Five. "If this could make George Washington President," runs the spiel for Number Six, "think what it could do for you. Caswell-Massey Number Six was used by George Washington before his inauguration. Also President Adams (it didn't say which Adams) and Lafayette. After 213 years it's still pretty revolutionary."

We're unquestionably confronted with a vast conspiracy. That last exhibit even suggests the ladies of the DAR may be involved, along with other Amazons. The objective: triumph of the matriarchy which many sociologists have long warned America was becoming. This male cologne kick is the coup de grace. It emasculates Don Juan and emboldens John Alden with the same false promise of conquest from a bottle.

Happily, I have devised protective action against this aromatic treachery. The cosmetic people are also pushing a female scent called Intimate, and to the question "what makes a shy girl get Intimate?" they reply, "It's the fragrance that does all the flirting for her. The inhibited perfume that makes things happen. What kind of things? That's her affair." I'm going to get a bottle of Intimate and put it side by side with Dante, the lotion "for men who know how to handle women," and see what sort of inferno ensues. We're approaching the era of total automation anyway.



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The Press: Reporting The Polish'd Horde

Society is now one polish'd horde,
Formed of two mighty tribes, the
Bores and the Bored.
—Lord Byron (1823)

BETWEEN THE FRONT PAGE and the classified ads of a daily newspaper lies a journalistic swampland known as the society (or women's) section. It is a strange and forbidding region of the press. Normal journalistic standards do not penetrate it. Competent writers seldom survive in it. And as for competent editors — well, if one should try to work his will on a society page he would likely be found the next morning bound and gagged with peau de soie and stabbed to death by what undoubtedly would be described by a society writer as a "perfectly exquisite silver dagger."

The society section has remained remarkably free of any good journalistic influence. It is a place where cliches and commercials hang from paragraphs like Spanish moss and where implicit values and attitudes have the twisted character of a cypress root; a place inhabited mainly by tittering reporters and publicity gluttons.

At first glance, it may appear that society writers deal only in trivia. Actually, their job is much more important.

—They keep advertisers happy by providing a plethora of free plugs that fill the society page in quantities matched only by the real estate section.

—They write about people who may, directly or indirectly, be useful to the paper as sources of news or advertising revenue.

—They help to boost circulation by writing titillating copy.

—They keep the fashion industry alive.

—Most important of all, they keep society itself alive.

Socially Prominent Products

The advertising aspect of the task is mostly concerned with matters of fashion. When Yves St. Laurent toured the country recently to sell his new perfume — called "Y" — his travels were carefully reported in the society pages. Even the *New York Times* did not blush at giving generous news space to M. St. Laurent to help him push his product. I wonder what would happen if Proctor & Gamble sought space to announce a new cleanser called "Y". Theoretically, the *Times* might be expected to give cleanser "Y" more space than perfume "Y" since more people would use it and it would produce more functional results. But this, of course, would not happen. As one quickly learns from reading the society pages, some products, like some people, are more socially acceptable than others.

Ruth Wagner, of the *Washington Post*, is one of those who keep track of the social register of proper merchandise. In a typical story she reported:

"Beatle furs are the thing of the year, according to Norman Silverman, who has revealed his collection of trend-setters at Capitol Furs.

". . . Norman is showing lynx, fitch and guanaco, all with strong natural markings, uninhibited personality and an affinity for going places and having fun . . .

"Norman previewed his collection, to the accompaniment of champagne and hors d'oeuvres, to an invited audience three evenings last week, and the furs are now officially ready for the fashionable chilly season."

Miss Wagner, like all good fashion writers, has an irrepressibly happy outlook on life, apparent from her assumption that a lynx, fitch or guanaco can maintain its uninhibited personality and affinity for going places and

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having fun even after being skinned to make one of Norman's furs. Her style is also properly euphemistic. On the society pages you get added points if you can replace nasty words like "winter" with phrases like "fashionable chilly season."

This last appears to have been a sudden brainstorm for Miss Wagner. A week or so earlier she was still slogging along with the old stand-by "winter" in an article in which she advised her readers that it was "high time your winter wardrobe was organized."

"Probably," she added, "you've already chosen a color scheme for the new season. It's best to keep a central dominant color, and blend or contrast others with it, to avoid a hit-or-miss look."

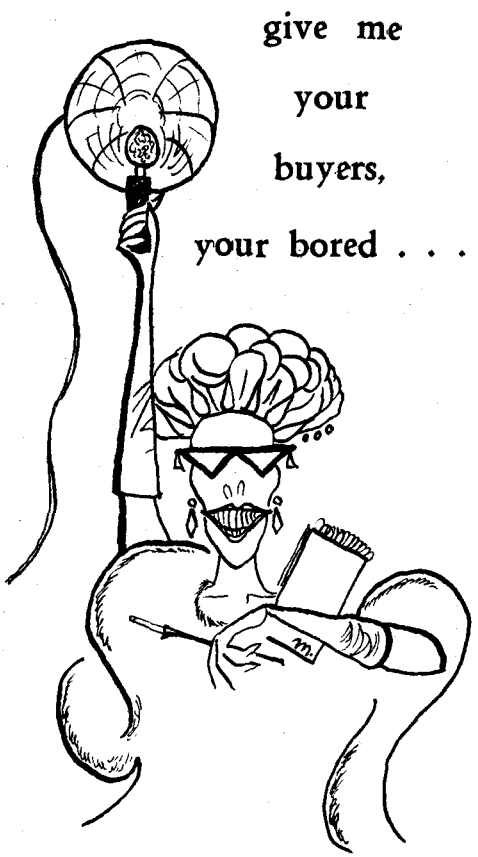
I was tempted, after reading this, to carry around a small notebook in which to scribble the central dominant color scheme of all my female friends, with little checkmarks for each time they maintained "wardrobe continuity" and big black X's for when they had that "hit-or-miss look." Without such a record I was certain I would never know the difference. I finally decided it was just as well.

Miss Wagner's fatuous advice is typical of fashion reporting, in which silly imperatives develop out of the mist and disappear as suddenly as they arrive. A few months from now, no doubt, some fashion writer will tell her readers to add "sparkle to your soirees" by using a different color each night of the season, and thus avoid that "dull monotone look." But one shouldn't be too critical. It keeps the goods moving. God help the fashion industry if a computer determines scientifically the proper length of a hemline.

While many women's page stories (like the one on the Beatle furs) frankly plug a particular store; others show slightly (although not much) more subtlety. A recent Washington *Evening Star* piece began by stating that "Over a thousand women clapped hands in time to Israeli rhythms yesterday, and thoroughly enjoyed the lavish spectacle of a Bonds for Israel fashion show. They purchased their way in to the tune of $150,000 in bonds to be invested in Israel."

Having established the worthiness of the cause, the story (and the caption of the accompanying photograph) could turn to more commercial matters, including the mention of one each department store, hotel, salon and orchestra.

The show, staged by Woodward & Lothrop, was a "fashion spectacular." Hubert Givenchy, the designer, produced "fabulous fashions." And the music by Devron was responsible for the "lively pace" of the event. Only the Sheraton-Park Hotel had to settle for a simple mention of its name.



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Finding the Silver Lining

It would be wrong, however, to think that the enthusiasm of society writers is limited to stories with commercial overtones. Many are adept at finding the silver lining in any occasion no matter how grim.

Thus Louise Durbin of the *Post* could report of the Potomac Hunt Ball:

"Master of the Fox Hounds William E. Carroll took a tumble Saturday morning when his horse stumbled on hidden wire, flipping Carroll into the ditch . . . He was taking the place of Potomac's huntsman Douglas Burgess. Huntsman Burgess has been out of commission for several weeks nursing broken ribs he received in a hunting accident. Now Carroll is in Suburban Hospital with a 'severe concussion.'

"But with encouraging words from Carroll's personal physician and fellow hunter, Dr. R. E. Moran, Sr. — 'He's tough and doing well' — the ball festivities carried on."

One paper that has tried to offer some relief from the cliches and trying cheerfulness of the society section is the *New York Times*. On a few choice occasions it has produced incisive and sardonic reports on major social events. Recently the *Times* hired Mrs. Frances Lanahan, a respectable Washington sort with a journalistic background, to write society news from the capital city. Mrs. Lanahan seems to have a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards her job (respectability and reporting are hard to mix well), but when she wants to she can write more like a perceptive reporter than a debutante in a tizzy. A good example of her work is an article that dealt with Washington's International Ball, held last November.

The Ball ran into trouble because of a *Post* article that questioned whether a gambling casino, planned as part of the event, was legal. The U.S. Attorney's office decided that it wasn't. This put a serious crimp in the proceedings, but the *Star's* writer, Betty Beale, tried her best to keep up a cheerful front:

"Undampened by the last minute cancellation of the International Ball's big gambling money-raising feature, society flocked to the whingding last night . . ."

Only late in the story did Miss Beale confess that the casino cancellation had hurt the party; and then she did it in the nicest possible way:

"But there is no question that it slowed down the planned fast pace of the event to a walk."

(Miss Beale also included the message that was printed on a card placed at each table. It tells more about people who run charity balls than any collection of tinseled adjectives. The card read in part:

"We still don't know why it seemed necessary for a newspaper article to draw our technical violation of a law to the attention of the authorities. We say 'technical' violation because while the antilottery law is quite correct, and we are law-abiding citizens, until now nobody has questioned the fact that money must be raised for our community needs and the best way to raise it is through some form of lottery." If a numbers seller on 7th St. had tried that line of argument I suspect he still would have landed in jail.)

The morning after Miss Beale's story, the *Times* ran Mrs. Lanahan's piece. It appeared under a headline:

INTERNATIONAL BALL, WITHOUT GAMING, GETS YAWNS

The subhead ran:

Auction Fails as a Substitution at Event in Washington

It was hard to believe that Miss Beale and Mrs. Lanahan had been to the same party. This was the Lanahan lead:

"The International Ball, deprived of the gambling casino that was to be its entertainment and provide $50,000 for the Children's Convalescent Hospital, held a wake at the Sheraton Park Hotel last night and early today."

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Mrs. Lanahan later added:

"The consensus seemed to be that the event was a dismal failure."

There were other differences of opinion. Said Miss Beale:

". . . The current best known dance teacher in the country, dynamic, likeable Killer Joe Piro, who got up on the orchestra platform with his partner and gave the entire assembly a lesson in the frug, which they all began doing every which way with enthusiasm."

But according to Mrs. Lanahan:

" 'Killer Joe' Piro, New York's most celebrated dance master, tried to redeem the party by teaching a new dance called the Ping Pong Ball, but even that was of insufficient interest to stir the disappointed guests."

In contrast with Mrs. Lanahan, who viewed the event in the manner of a longtime city hall reporter describing a totally unproductive council meeting, Miss Beale found good in everything:

"whingding . . . rosy view . . . bewitching and glittering candlelight scene . . . plush background . . . array of fabulous prizes . . . elegant . . . chic affair . . . dynamic, likeable . . . handsome program . . . superb painting."

The Beale and Lanahan columns did agree on one thing. The auction held in place of the casino was a confusing affair. Mrs. Lanahan reported that "nobody had the faintest idea what was going on . . ." and Miss Beale noted:

"In the noise of the chatter of 1000 persons Gen. Musgrave bid in a motorcycle when he thought he was getting the $1000 wardrobe for his wife."

What a fabulous fun evening for Gen. Musgrave and his wife!

The Cause

One essential ingredient of many society stories is The Cause. People in society tend to believe that the best way to cure cancer, get kids off their crutches and also prevent a creeping welfare state is for "everyone who matters" to dance, dine, get drunk and spend lots of money at a benefit.

Unfortunately, there are not enough people in society to affect significantly the health and social problems of the country. But this one would never suspect from reading the society pages; rather it would appear that the Junior League and charity balls offer worthy alternatives to the Great Society's spending programs.

A recent headline in the *Times* ran:

KIDNEY PATIENTS
WILL BE ASSISTED
BY DEC. 29 BALL

The headline conjured up the image of the Lourdes shrine making a one night stand at the Astor Hotel, with aching souls rising from stretchers on the stage to the accompaniment of *Everything's Coming Up Roses* played with a Lester Lanin beat.

Of course, it wasn't quite like that. A more accurate headline would have been:

KIDNEY PATIENTS
USED AS EXCUSE
FOR DEC. 29 BALL

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To be sure, kidney patients were indirectly helped by the ball (the proceeds going in part to support various health foundations) but the *Times*, like most newspapers, ignored the fact that society and the halt and the ill of the country are in a symbiotic relationship. It's not just a one-way affair.

Sometimes the public display of beneficence gets a little heavyhanded, as in a special newspaper supplement on the International Ball. Included was an ad for Ralph Brown Buick that featured a full page picture of a young tot from the Children's Convelescent Hospital leaning on Mr. Brown and Mrs. Lloyd H. Hand. Above the picture was the headline:

SHOULDERS FOR A BOY TO LEAN ON

And the copy said, in part:

"Mrs. Lloyd H. Hand, wife of the U.S. Chief of Protocol, was late for an important reception the warm summer afternoon this photograph was made. But Mrs. Hand was concerned about a new-found friend named Chris and unhurriedly she gave her time to the cause this picture serves. Mr. Ralph H. Brown interrupted his attention to the details of directing and hosting his continuous reception for the most elite automobile buyers in the world: important, busy people giving up part of their time to become really important in the eyes of a boy named Chris . . ."

At the bottom of the page, in large letters, was:

RALPH BROWN BUICK

The ad left one wondering just *whose* cause the picture did serve.

Elizabeth I & II

Of all the society writers in Washington, the one who fascinates me most is Maxine Chesire. Her style epitomizes the society page literary approach. The recent visit of Princess Margaret to the U.S. permitted Mrs. Chesire to hit her stride.

Marshall: Scoring Points

She displayed her mastery of the cute lead:

"Thanks to the young sister of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, an English-born movie queen who also happens to be named Elizabeth has at last regained the Hollywood throne she once so willingly forsook for love.

Elizabeth I (Roman numeral one because she is the one and only Elizabeth Taylor) was summoned royally out of social exile here last night along with Richard V (her fifth husband Richard Burton)."

And:

"It's too late now for you to get palsy with Attorney General Nicholas Katzenbach's wife Lydia. She will be hostess to Princess Margaret . . ."

Her report on the Katzenbach party itself produced a brilliant non sequitor of the variety often seen in society columns:

"Princess Margaret definitely scored points last night on Rhodesia. The Katzenbachs had invited two prominent Negroes . . ." The relationship between the assertion in the first sentence and the fact in the second was never made clear. Perhaps it helped to explain why two Negroes had been invited to the party; or maybe Maxine Chesire thinks Thurgood Marshall assists the Administration in formulating its Rhodesian policy; or could it be

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HUGH HAYNIE ...

" 'Course We're Not Trying To Hide Anything! Now—If You'll Look Right Here—"

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2. We also sell space in the conventional manner. Our rates: $35 a page; $22 a half-page; $3 a column inch. No time or frequency discounts.
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that Princess Margaret asked him for advice because he's a Negro? It was the sort of relationship multiple choice tests like to propose, i.e. "with which of the following do Princess Margaret and two prominent Negroes have most in common? a) The Beatles b) Lord Snowden c) Rhodesia."

It is not surprising, though, that Mrs. Chesire had trouble working the two Negroes into her story. Negroes are rarities in the society pages. With the exception of an occasional mention like the one accorded Marshall, or a rare photograph of a dark-skinned model or big Negro cotillion, the society section acts as though Negroes never got married, gave to charity, or held parties.

This stems in part from the general attitude of newspapers toward Negroes. They tend to report them as an issue or problem, but pay little attention to them as individuals. The average Negro can only hope to attract the notice of his local daily by robbing a liquor store, playing football or dying.

More important, however, Negroes are not part of the society page because they are not part of society. Society is an institution strongly based on the ugly foundation of discrimination. Its premises are similar to those of Sheriff Jim Clark, filled with spurious ideas about people's "worth" and "place." The typical daily (even ostentatiously liberal papers like the *Washington Post*) never point out this kinship, prefering to ignore society's seamy philosophical basis.

Among Mrs. Chesire's other virtues is her quick journalistic left hook:

"Tammy Grimes, wearing the only short dress of the evening and *sans* stockings came with mouth open and tongue in cheek."

And of the White House party for Margaret:

"Mrs. Ford, suntanned and with tawny hair that hung down her back, displayed a magnificent figure in a strapless white crepe dress which required her to stop periodically and tug it back into place. At one point, she didn't quite fast enough."

I would like to see Arthur Schlesinger try to put *that* in his book.

Mrs. Chesire was even fearless in bringing the Princess up short:

"Despite the fact that she brought 75 pieces of luggage which weighed precisely one ton, Her Royal Highness found herself inappropriately garbed for the day she helped to plot."

"'She looks,' sniffed the fashion editor of one influential West Coast newspaper 'as if she were going off to tea at Buckingham Palace.'"

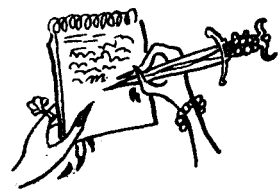
With people like Maxine Chesire sniffing their way through Washington and other cities, daily papers are much more entertaining. It doesn't, however, help the state of the journalistic craft much.

True, if the dailies didn't carry such stuff we'd all be more inclined to subscribe to movie fan magazines or the *National Enquirer*.

It does seem, though, that we have enough problems in this country caused by false emphasis on status, hoked-up values and worthless discriminations without such a healthy daily assist from the press.

I suppose there's not much reason to expect any major reform in the nature of society sections. About the best we can hope for would be more critical, perceptive reporting in the manner of the *New York Times* at its best or perhaps a return to the lean style of small town social columns. Such as this item from a Alaskan newspaper:

"Mr. Jones has gone outside to Florida with his mistress, leaving Mrs. Jones to tend the store."



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The Idler's Journal

Finally tried them

I FINALLY ATE some steamed crabs the other day. I wouldn't have done it then except that I was forced to by circumstances. Not that I hadn't been often told how good they are. It's just that whenever they appear on a restaurant menu, there's always something else that looks more appetizing.

But a few weeks back several of us took a run down the river and dropped into a small restaurant and bar that contained numerous tables (covered with brown wrapping paper), a dozen or so slot machines and three other customers.

Could we see a menu? It won't do you any good, the bartender explained. "My cook isn't here and my waitress has some sort of disease. All I got is crabs."

"We'll have some crabs."

"How many you want?"

How many crabs do three people want when you don't get rolls and butter, cole slaw, french fries, a slab of pie, and none of you have ever eaten crabs before?

A dozen will do, the bartender suggested (but later added several more "because they're small.")

The crabs, steamed and spiced, piled high on a large platter and looking like the finale of an abortive rushing play in a crustacean football game, arrived quickly, accompanied by the only eating utensils provided, three knives and three large wooden dowels.

The bartender outlined the accepted method of attack, first yanking the tail on the underbody of the crab, then pulling the hapless creature apart, separating his top from his bottom. With a dowel he cracked the claws and within seconds had removed the crab's miserly store of meat.

"Like that, you see?"

We saw, but I, at least, failed to conquer. After several minutes of rapping, twisting, pulling, and scraping I only managed to extract a fraction of a mouthful. The crab, I concluded, has a shell that hides less than a fully padded brassiere.

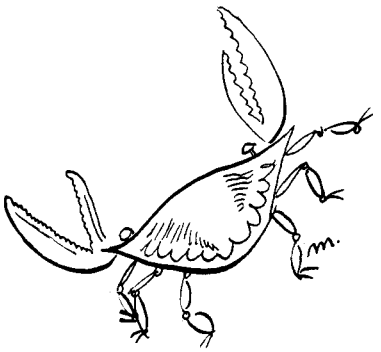
The meat, I really confess, is good. Carefully scoured from the shell by unseen hands in some air-conditioned restaurant downtown, crabmeat makes excellent cocktails, salads, sandwiches and cakes. But meeting a crab whole and attempting to obtain its essence aided only by a dowel and knife is a frustrating and unfulfilling enterprise.

A crab is an animal that nature must have created when she was very, very tired and under the care of a psychoanalyst. It is an ugly beast, condemned to move forever in lateral motion, and rises from the bottom of the sea only to be eaten.

Even the lobster, a sleeker and more succulent inhabitant of the ocean floor, faces the world head on. But the crab crawls through life on a bias, presumably only seeing the future after it has entered the present.

Its crude looks and habits make it small wonder that the crab has contributed its name to so many unpleasant things and characteristics: ill-temper, a bad stroke of the oar, a poor throw of the dice, a sour apple and vermin.

One of the problems I have with eating steamed crabs is that I am acute-



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Back issues of THE IDLER, when available, at these rates: single copies: 35c; three or more: 25c each; ten or more: 20c each. Idler 125 Fifth St. NE, Washington 2, D.C.

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For information send stamped self-addressed envelope to Box 1862, San Francisco, California 94101

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The Idler is available in an air mail edition printed on light-weight paper at the following rates:

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Current subscribers wishing to change to the air mail edition for the remaining issues of their subscription are invited to write us for rate information.

John Lindsay is the new power in the GOP. What does he think about foreign aid? You'll find it in Idler #10. 35c. Idler, 125 Fifth St. NE, Washington 2, D.C.

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Mediaeval brass rubbings. Fine art print of the monumental brass of Henry Sever (died 1471) Chaplain to Henry VII, Chancellor of Oxford University, from Merton College, Oxford. 60" x 21" gold on blue or scarlet. $15. Write RUBBINGS, c/o IDLER.

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DEALERS IN

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Fill your freezer with organically raised Angus beef from registered herd, Maine, twelfth year. Shipped frozen in oven-ready, family size packages. From cattle raised in natural environment free of pesticides, chemical fertilizers and toxic substances. Minimum shipment: one cubic-foot carton. Write BEEF, c/o Idler.

New Republic, new, renewal, 25 issues, $3.00. Newsweek, 44 issues, $4.80, Progressive, 10 issues, $2.50. Pollack's Publishers Service, Little Silver, New Jersey.

Iron spiral staircase. 17 steps. About 12' high. Rescued from condemned hospital that took care of Civil War patients. Weight unknown but heavy. Washington area. $250. Write STAIR c/o Idler.

CREDITS

The character sketches are drawn by John Perts, of Suffolk, Va.

Some of the incidental drawings are by Mike Bell, of Cambridge, Mass.

Bob and Susie Sanderson, of Bristol, R. I., helped — as usual — with the production of this issue.

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The article by Edward P. Morgan is from the ABC radio broadcast, "Edward P. Morgan and the News" sponsored by the AFL-CIO.

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ly aware of what it is that I am consuming. It reminds me uncomfortably of high school biology class. Each morsel removed demands identification, notation and placement on a slide for further examination under a microscope.

People's sensitivity about such matters vary. An Englishman I met recently said he did not care for large American steaks because they did not look like mere food. As he ate a huge sirloin, he said, he constantly reflected on the fact that anything that size must have come from a once-live animal. This he didn't like.

My own feelings are not particularly logical. I happily gorge myself on lobster, but become uninterested in a calf's liver if I run across a piece of anatomical tubing. Crabs, as I have discovered, are blatant in their exposure of the less attractive portions of their persons, while hiding their only worth in innumerable crevices.

The price of crabs varies from place to place and, like most other food.

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I request THE IDLER to run an advertisement concerning the product described below. I agree to pay THE IDLER 10% of the selling price if under $100, 5% if between $100 and $1000, or 3% if over $1000; if my product or article is sold as a result of an inquiry to THE IDLER, I agree to notify THE IDLER promptly of a sale, so that the ad may be withdrawn. I understand THE IDLER will assume no responsibility in transactions. I understand that the ad will be run at the discretion of THE IDLER and that it may be edited to meet space requirements.

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has increased dramatically over time.

H. L. Mencken, writing of Baltimore in the 1880's, noted that he could well recall "the time when prime hard crabs of the channel species, blue in color, at least eight inches in length along the shell, and with snow-white meat almost as firm as soap, were hawked in Hollins street of Summer mornings at ten cents a dozen."

John Neary, also a writer and also from Baltimore, tells me that during a recent trip to Tangier Island off the coast of Virginia he found that crabs are sold there for 8 cents apiece.

The dozen plus we ate figured out, after subtracting the beer from the check, at about ten cents each.

Meanwhile, thirty miles to the north in Washington, customers were paying two bucks for a pair.

But the price of crabs doesn't really have much bearing on whether you like them or not, and I don't think I'll be eating them in the shell too often — unless somebody's cook is gone and his waitress is sick.

Q. In the Goldwater defeat of 1964 how many Republicans in the House of Representatives lost their seats?"

—T. Upton, Indianpolis, Ind.

A. At least 38.

—*Parade Magazine*

Still waiting for late returns, huh?

Flotsam & Jetsam

WE MET A girl the other evening who told us she was going down Pennsylvania Avenue when a motorcycle policeman came alongside and told her to pull over. He then wrote out a $10 ticket for going through a red light.

Nothing especially unusual about the story except that she was riding a bicycle at the time.

The cop deadpanned his way through the whole operation and never smiled, not even when he came to the part of the ticket that required him to ask, "What make of vehicle is this?"

The girl thought it was pretty funny until she learned she had been assessed points on her driver's license.

ENCOURAGING NEWS from Washington's bail project. Out of 1,324 persons released without bail since the program began two years ago, only 40 failed to show up in court. That's only 3%.

The New Republic recently printed an interesting story on Maryland's Sunday blue laws, those archaic regulations (similar to those in many other states) which are hard to enforce, ambiguous, and seem to rest on forcing one man's religious tastes on another. The piece reminded us of a conversation overheard a few years back in a St. Louis drug store one Sunday morning.

"I'd like to buy a baby bottle."

"I'm sorry; I'm not allowed to sell them on Sundays."

"Oh . . . well, let me have a carton of Luckies."

"Sure."

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"It's the White House. He says if we don't rescind our wage demands he's going to release his stockpile of civil servants."

THERE'S AN ALL purpose political button being worn these days that reads as follows:

ABOLISH: HUAC, KKK, FBI, CIA, Apartheid, McCarran Act, Minutemen, Military-Industrial Complex, the Bomb, Loyalty Oath, AMA, Profit, Power Elite, Capital Punishment.

SUPPORT: NLF, FSM, APDUSA, SNCC, MFDP, Deacons, CABS, Brooklyn CORE, 40 for Forty, David Mitchell, Tabata, Flouridation, Dagmar Wilson, Radio Free Dixie, Staughton Lynd for President.

END: War in Vietnam, Censorship, the Draft, Colonialism, Police Brutality, Creeping Fascism.

FREE: Elinor Goldstein, Morton Sobell, and for God's sake hands off the damn Bloomington students.

IF YOU EVER get to Spring Mills, Pa., (it's not too long a haul from Harrisburg) be sure and drop by the Spring Mills Hotel. You'll be able to find it because it has a sign out front that reads:

SPRING MILLS HOTEL
QUICK LUNCH ANTIQUE PIANOS

In the bar you'll find an amazing assortment of player pianos and other coin-operated music machines. There's one device that plays two violins. The violano, as it's called, is of 1925 vintage and, according to a small plaque on its face was "Designated by the U.S. Govt. as the Eighth Greatest Invention of the Decade." It costs a quarter to hear such songs as *Show That Fellow the Door* and *So Does Your Old Mandolin* and is worth it, even if the mechanical Menuhin is a

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little out of tune. The Spring Mills Hotel's fans apparently sometimes find it difficult to restrain their enthusiasm for there's a sign posted on the machine that reads: "Please do not jump or stamp your feet."

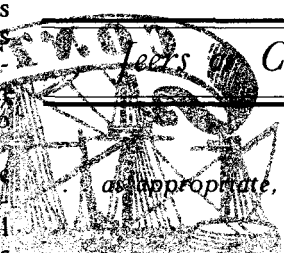
There are several more mundane coin music makers, including a singing canary, but against the back wall is a rare example of one of Wurlitzer's greatest triumphs: The Orchestra Piano.

Slip a coin in the slot and red lights flash on and off, motors whir and from the rococo monster come the sounds of a piano, organ, mandolin, violin, viola, flute, bells, bass, snare drum and triangle. The machine was bought new in 1927 for $2400 and is still pounding, plucking and puffing its way through its original carefully selected repertoire.

Jack Weaver, who started the collection a few years back and who runs the place, will gladly take you into a room off the bar and give a complete performance, using a player piano from the 19th century, a hand cranked player organ, an Edison cylinder type gramophone, a player accordion (just pump the bellows, the keys are fake) and a phonograph with a toy vaudevillian attached to its spindle who does a dance as the record is spun. Mr. Weaver, who's become quite an expert on these curious specimens, has even made his own player rolls, carefully cutting out the holes in the right places.

But above all, when you go to the Spring Mills Hotel, make sure you stay late enough into the evening to be present when one of the bar patrons inserts a coin in each of the numerous devices at roughly the same time.

The result must rank high among the most magnificently cacophonic moments these ears have ever been privileged to experience.



Jeers or Cheers . . .

as appropriate, to the following:

☞ THE U.S. STATE Department, for another in its continuing contributions to the cause of American fiction, this time a pamphlet called the "Dominican Crisis," which gives something less than an accurate impression of the real-life crisis of the same name. One reporter noted that most of the pictures in the booklet show American troops "busy escorting people to safety, distributing rice to Dominican housewives, treating sick and wounded Dominicans and patting small children on the head." Only one shot of a GI with a weapon in his hand, and he was protecting, naturally, a poor kid from rebel sniper fire.

☞ THE ADVERTISING FEDERATION of America, for its staunch opposition to efforts to teach children not to believe everything they hear in commercials. Says AFA of consumer-education programs in high schools:

"It is our firm belief that neither government, professional consumer groups, business nor advertising have the right to further complicate the critical situation in our schools by invading the curriculum for the purpose of spreading propaganda and thereby distracting the students from the serious purpose of gaining a meaningful, proper education."

The AFA claims that consumer-education programs "unfairly influence our school children's thinking and create doubt and suspicion in their minds as to the integrity and dependability of the country's business firms and their advertising practices."

What an awful thing to have happen to the Pepsi generation!

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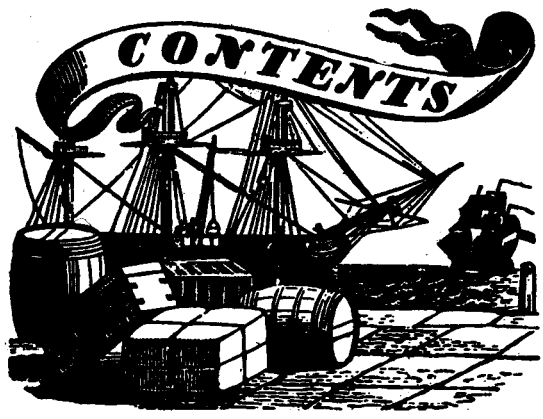

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